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The Highland Lakes of Texas

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United States Department of the Interior Harold L. Ickes • Secretary

National Park Service Newton B. Drury • Director

THE HIGHLAND LAKES OF TEXAS

A STUDY PREPARED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF
THE PARK, PARKWAY
AND RECREATIONAL STUDY ACT OF JUNE 1936
[49 STAT. 1894]



Made Upon the Request and With the Cooperation

of the Lower Colorado River Authority

and the

Texas State Parks Board

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE following recommendations, summarized briefly from the findings of this survey, are intended to serve as suggestions to those who may be interested in accomplishing the objectives of the plan and program herein proposed.

Acquisition

All lands indicated within the proposed boundary should be acquired and held in perpetuity as a park and recreational area under State management. Such lands as are now held in public ownership within the recommended boundaries should be transferred to the administration of whatever authority is selected to direct its development and operation.

Legislation

Legislation, sufficient in its scope to assure early acquisition, proper development, and administration, is considered essential.

Private Rights

All valid claims, locations, and entries, whether they are for mineral, homestead, or other rights, should be protected. The right to tax private properties and business operating within the area should remain with the State.

Mining

Where valid mining claims exist they should be honored, but no additional mining rights or patents should be issued.

Grazing and Farming

Grazing and farming should be gradually curtailed and finally eliminated upon a schedule which would allow sufficient time for present operators to establish themselves elsewhere.

Accessibility

A minimum amount of roads and trails should be developed, sufficient only to give the public access to areas considered essential for the proper development and protection of the area as a whole.

Planning

Plans which anticipate future needs and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of park and recreational needs should be developed in advance of actual construction operations.

Fees and Charges

Persons using such an area should pay a small fee toward its upkeep. Such organized companies or individuals as may eventually be authorized to operate within the area should likewise contribute to the support of the area on the basis of returning to the State a percentage of earned profits.

Forestry

Existing natural forest growth and ground cover should be perpetuated. The present program of cedar eradication should be discontinued if park and recreational values are to be preserved.

Wildlife

Wildlife should be fully protected and encouraged without artificial aids within the suggested boundaries. Hunting should be prohibited except as may be administratively provided for in the form of public hunting grounds; fish should be planted in all of the included lake waters, and uniform game laws should be established and enforced.

Public Facilities

Where satisfactory accommodations are available in nearby localities they should be encouraged. Duplicate facilities should not be provided within the area if satisfactory facilities are developed by private enterprise at convenient locations and in sufficient quantities to properly take care of public needs.

Operation

It is essential that a centralized one-authority control be established to plan, develop, and administer such an area as is herein recommended. Of all known State agencies, the Texas State Parks Board is believed to be best qualified to perform this service.

The acreage figures are approximate. They will vary according to the amount of water impounded.

The suggested boundary indicated on the drawing encloses an area of approximately 416,000 acres including the acreage of the four lakes, or approximately 360,000 acres of land surface.

The road system as proposed represents a system which would adequately serve the entire area. Approximately 80 miles of existing State or county road locations are included in the system, which would leave approximately 100 miles of new roads—as connection links—to be constructed.







IN reading the following letter, written by the President of the United States to the Congress, one cannot fail to realize that the best minds of our country are seriously concerned with the problems of conserving our physical and our human resources; and that these two principal sources of our Nation's wealth are so inseparably bound to each other that they must of necessity be considered simultaneously: that is, if we are to insure to future generations a constant and positive national prosperity, which we the present generation enjoy and to which they are entitled.

Such sound advice so well expressed is applicable wherever similar problems are presented.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TRANSMITTING

A REPORT ON THE RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TENNESSEE RIVER SYSTEM

To the Congress of the United States:

So much publicity has been given by the press and in other ways to the power development feature of the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority that it is fair to assume that many of our citizens and even Government officials hold a belief that the purpose of the act creating the Authority was primarily the development of electric power.

It is perhaps time to call attention to this utter fallacy.

The original legislation, based on my recommendation to the Congress in 1933, was intended—in part as an experimental project—to raise the standards of life by increasing social and economic advantages in a given area, in this case the whole of the watershed which runs into the Tennessee River and including portions of many States.

Part of this objective meant the elimination of very large annual damage to life and property as a result of floods; and, therefore, it was planned to build a series of dams in the Tennessee River and on some of its many tributaries. The building of such dams would, it was figured, reduce property damage which had averaged \$20,000,000 a year for a long time. The building of such dams would also make possible the production of a large amount of electric power and would also afford barge navigation for many hundreds of miles up the river.

Furthermore, the original objective of the law included many other things, such as the planting of water-retaining forests near the headwaters of the many rivers and streams, the terracing of farm hillsides, the building of small check dams, the development of fertilizer, the diversification of crops and other soil-building methods, the improvement of highways and other forms of transportation, the bringing in of small industries, the extension of rural electric lines, and many other similar activities.

In other words, it is time that people should understand that power development was only a part—and ultimately only a relatively small part—of a great social and economic experiment in one of our major watersheds.

From time to time I have transmitted to the Congress special reports from the Tennessee Valley Authority relating to special subjects in the progress of this great task. I am transmitting herewith the latest of these reports, a monograph on the "Recreation Development of the Tennessee River System." This summarizes "the results that have been accomplished through certain experiments and demonstrations in this field and contains specific conclusions and recommendations with respect to additional legislation on this subject." It is coming to be realized more and more that in the improvement of our American civilization we cannot stop at hospitals and schools any more than we can confine ourselves to strictly economic subjects. Recreation in its broad sense is a definite factor in the improvement of the bodies and minds of our future citizens.

I hope that this report, which is only one of many which the Tennessee Valley Authority has made from time to time, will dispel any erroneous impression that the Tennessee Valley Authority's work is concerned principally with the mere development of electric power.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE

January 15, 1940.



Some sixty thousand acres of clear lake waters in a setting of green-clad hills are the genius of "The Highland Lakes" of Texas.

PREFACE

Texas—so wealthy in the variety and extent of its resources; so important in its contributions to the economic, social, and educational aspects of our national life; so diversified in the production of positive forces which have added immeasurably to the Nation's sum-total of forward-moving energies; so strategically located with reference to the two poles of the earth which in turn contribute to its balanced climate; so placed in the pattern of the United States that it functions as a pendulum to keep other parts of the Nation in productive operation—might truly be, in fact is, a miniature empire in its own right. During its corporate history of less than a hundred years, Texas has emerged from a changing, nebulous region of indefinition without boundaries, or indeed without a social or political order that would pass muster in any but the most elementary classes of National or State societies, into a dynamic, indispensable unit of our Nation's physical make-up.

Agriculture; railroads; education; oil; statesmen; highways; industries; the building of cities in less than a hundred years from log-cabin villages into meccas of civic and social security; shipping and livestock; great power plants on its riverways; flood-control projects so far-reaching in their scope as to stagger one's imagination—these are but a few of the accomplishments that have sprung from its soil and from its people, accomplishments that have poured forth from a melting pot of resources and human energy to create a State of wealth, a State of power, a State of dignity, and of widely diversified interests.

It is often the case in any country or region that must be won from wilderness to serve man's requirements that the amenities of living are apt to come only after the framework of a social and a civic order is in place. In this respect Texas has been no exception. Time has been short and the problems of development so great that the State, as such, has had little time to lift its eyes to a wider horizon that includes something more than just living. But now a firm civic and social framework is in place. Now the mature Statehood of Texas has been firmly established and a breathing spell in its labors makes it possible to consider other things. Now time has been found to consider seriously the use of its natural wealth: these things called resources which exist as possessions of the people, resources that are generally conceded to be the endowed inheritance of every inhabitant, rich and poor, young and old alike and of generations yet to come who will inherit them, the materials from which the physical structure of the State has been fabricated.

One hundred years ago—a mere stone's throw as time is reckoned—such terms as resources, and especially such terms as "scenic resources," "recreation," "conservation," and "human resources" would have held little meaning for our forefathers. Their immediate task was to wrest a living from the land. Not until a large portion of the countryside had been won from a total wilderness could they really enjoy the wilderness of the remaining part. Only recently have we perceived that this wilderness must be cherished and preserved or it will be lost. Changing conditions have brought new meanings to old words.

So today, the terms "scenic resources," "recreation," and "conservation" mean something more to most of us than they did a few short years ago. We think of them in the same category as "timber resources" or "mineral resources" were thought of twenty, thirty, forty years ago. They are as surely and as truly a form of wealth—commodities that can be bought and sold—as are land, oil rights, or cotton: items in which we carry on daily barter and exchange.

There is one vital difference, however, which places these resources in a class quite by themselves. The more times they are exchanged the more valuable they become and, best of all, title to them remains forever vested in the original owner: namely, the people.

These few words are set forth in preface to this survey to serve as a constant reminder that the problems herein undertaken are recognized as a task of no small importance. It is fully realized that the intricate pattern of the State's social, civic, and economic fabric must be constantly kept

before us and that a humble sincerity with every consideration but without undue regard for such things as individuals or individual places must of necessity dictate the conclusions reached.

Therefore the State of Texas was prospected with a view to discovering the location and extent of the State's scenic and recreational wealth. It is realized that the success or failure of the plan presented will depend upon the thoroughness of our investigations and the impartial honesty of conclusions reached but, most important of all, upon whether or not the people of Texas will adopt the plan proposed and follow the suggested recommendations.

If, by some mysterious-magic, it were possible to bridge that invisible gap between the minds of men and penetrate the insulation which serves so completely to retain their respective thoughts (without the use of printed words, laid end to end like so many bricks in a wall), reports and surveys such as this would have little value in presenting an analysis of the problem herein undertaken.

Fortunately or otherwise, this is not possible, but only wishful thinking to simplify a task which according to our present methods of doing things becomes one of assembling these tiny imprints of ink on paper—the pictures and the drawings that accompany them—with the fitting together of such words as seem appropriate at the time into some pattern that will serve as a messenger to the reader and forcefully bring to his attention a suggested program and plan which the National Park Service has formulated and is recommending for the State of Texas.

The least that can be hoped for is that some worth-while purpose will be served and that our efforts will receive an unprejudiced reception by open minds.



Stephen Austin was visionary in selecting the scenic center as well as the geographic center of the State to be developed as the Capital City of Texas.

THE HIGHLAND LAKES OF TEXAS

ALTHOUGH this survey was conducted and the results of its findings were prepared under the sponsorship of the "Lower Colorado River Authority," it is directed to the attention of all persons who may be interested, directly or otherwise, in preserving the scenic and recreational resources of the State of Texas. In order to establish a background for the benefit of persons not altogether familiar with the procedure of such undertakings it should be explained at the beginning why the survey was undertaken, who sponsored it, and, briefly, how it was conducted.

The extensive program of flood control and power development that is now nearing its final stages of construction of the Colorado River has been so widely publicized that it would seem superfluous to dwell on any lengthy explanation of the aims and objectives of that program at this time.

It would seem sufficient to say that the three main purposes for which the Lower Colorado River Authority was created are soil and water conservation, flood control, and the generation of power. For the past six years there has been in progress a program of dam and reservoir construction which promises to be the greatest achievement of its kind ever undertaken in the State of Texas.

With the completion of each new dam the Colorado River has gradually been transformed from a fluctuating and destructive stream into a



This simple sign "State Park" would serve as a welcome and as a perpetual guarantee that the Highland Lakes region belongs to the people for their use and enjoyment.



PHOTO BY ELLISON, AUSTIN, TEX

More than 600 miles of shore line that varies from steep cliffs to sandy beaches add much to the scenic charm of a region that 6 years ago was the gathering place of floodwaters that caused so much destruction in the Colorado Valley below

series of clear lakes extending for a distance of more than 100 miles. The dams built and the lakes thus created were made possible with public funds. They are owned by the public and controlled for its benefit.

Likewise, with the completion of each new dam there became increasingly manifest a very important byproduct of this river development: the value of the impounded waters for recreational purposes. Within a period of a few brief years there has been made available to the people of Texas a vast potential recreational domain which includes some 60,000 acres of water surface, with more than 670 miles of shore line. It is this byproduct of recreation with which this survey is concerned.

As custodian of this new domain, acquired and held in the name of the State and the United States, the Authority has been constantly and fully conscious of an obligation to permit the fullest use of the lakes and lake shores consistent with public needs and public demands. It has also been aware of the further obligation to integrate the use of this newly created lake region with recreational developments elsewhere in the State, in order to be sure that the maximum social and economic returns would be guaranteed.

In its observations the Authority could not possibly overlook the accelerated interest of the public in all manner of activities related to the use of the newly created lakes. Docks, in some instances sufficient to care for as many as three hundred boats, were being constructed. People from a great many localities throughout the State were becoming actively interested in acquiring property with shore frontage, for both public and private developments. The adjoining counties of Travis, Burnet, and Llano were developing certain areas on the lake shores as parks with several miles of access roads already built and more roads contemplated. The city of Austin had acquired a tract of land bordering on the north shores of Lake Austin and had already embarked on an extensive program of park developments to serve the city and anyone else who might care to use them. Swimming, boating, and fishing clubs were being organized. The Boy Scouts of America were preparing to expand their camping facilities previously established on one of the lake shores. The State Parks Board of Texas had just recently developed and opened to the public Long Horn Caverns in Burnet County, developing the surrounding areas as a State Park, and were interested in acquiring additional lands



Lake Buchanan is an inland sea of clear water in a region where cedars and cactus at one time flourished.

that might be intensively developed for recreational purposes on the shores of Inks Lake.

The offices of the Authority were receiving an increasing number of inquiries daily from persons and organizations throughout the State, asking such questions as "When will the lakes be available for our use?" "May we have access to the lakes when the dams are completed?" "What provisions are being made for swimming, boating, fishing, camping, etc.?" These and many other questions of a similar nature were constantly brought to the Authority's attention.

Since the Authority is concerned primarily with soil and water conservation, flood control and the production of electric power, and since it is not primarily interested, authorized, or organized to embark upon an extensive program of providing recreational facilities to the public, it seemed obvious and proper to have the area in which its operations are centralized surveyed with a view to determining whether the lake

region really did possess qualities of sufficient scenic and recreational worth to warrant the assumption that the entire lake region might eventually become developed as a park and recreational area of State-wide importance.

As a result of this desire on the part of the Authority to render a service to the public which it was not prepared to undertake, the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior was requested to undertake a survey for the Authority. Thus, a problem was recognized and an attempt made to find an answer to it.

Here it should be recorded that the National Park Service was given free rein to conduct the survey in its own way, with a clearly defined series of recommendations as its principal objective.

At the very beginning, personnel representing the National Park Service were informed that no individual or special groups were to be regarded as having any special interests to be served.

THE INVESTIGATION

Before considering in a serious way the park and recreational possibilities of the Highland Lakes Region on the Colorado River, it seemed advisable that the existing recreational facilities of the State be first examined to determine the spread and location of existing and proposed park facilities throughout the State. In this connection our task was greatly simplified due to the fact that the National Park Service and the Texas State Parks Board, in partnership under the authority of the Park, Parkway and Recreation Study Act of June 1936 (49 Stat. 1894) have been actively engaged in conducting a recreational survey of the entire State for a period of more than 3 years. A great amount of original research has gone into this effort which has produced a voluminous report accompanied by a series of maps and tabulated information that has proven invaluable. The general survey just referred to records quite clearly an analysis of the recreational needs and a suggested program for the State set forth in broad terms.

Maps of the State's topography as prepared by the United States Geological Survey were made available. Histories of the State were consulted. Various documents prepared by the State Planning Board were used as reference material. Brochures from various parts of the State were used and a great many local, State, and Government officials gave generously of their time and assistance in a search for basic material upon which to formulate an approach to the task undertaken.

Even with such an accumulation of data available it was still considered necessary to investigate at first hand every portion of the State in order to check on the ground the roadside picnic areas as developed by the State Highway Department, to investigate the State's topography and forest cover, to examine numerous lakes and reservoirs, and to inspect State Park areas already developed and other areas proposed. More than 25,000 miles in travel distance have been covered, by automobile and boat, by airplane and on foot, in order to prospect the State's scenic and recreational resources which have been, or might be at

some time in the future, made available for public use.

The Coastal Plains from Port Arthur to Corpus Christi, Amarillo and the Pan Handle Country, Laredo and the Rio Grande plains, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Del Rio, Alpine, Brownwood, are listed as a few of the centers of population and types of diversified topography in widely different portions of the State that were visited to determine whether the countryside in any portion of the State might not offer something more attractive, some large area that held greater prospects for park and recreational purposes, than the Highland Lakes Region of the Hill Country.

Due recognition has been given to "Big Bend National Park Proposed" and to the possibilities of establishing a National Seashore on the Gulf Coast. Likewise, investigations extended as far south as Monterrey in Old Mexico. It is factors of this nature that must be given consideration in any planning program which contemplates the selecting and developing of large areas of land for recreational and park purposes. It was only after an extensive examination of the State's park potentialities was completed that the Highland Lakes Region was examined in detail.

Before discussing this last phase of the examination it may be of interest to know what we were searching for and the principal factors that were used in appraising the many regions inspected for possible park purposes. We were searching for areas that possessed as many of the following attributes as could be included in a single area.

- 1. Variety of elevation.
- 2. Shade.
- 3. Water.
- 4. Unpopulated areas.
- 5. Few major highways within an area.
- 6. Numerous major highways that might be used as access roads.
- 7. Inexpensive land.
- 8. Geological interest.
- 9. Temperate climatic conditions.
- 10. A minimum of objectionable features.
- 11. Access to centers of population.
- 12. Sufficient size to provide facilities for all age groups over long periods of time.
- 13. Scenic qualities, etc.

Having finished with a tour of the State, we then inspected in detail the Highland Lakes Region.

The United States Army Air Corps provided a plane for the purpose of viewing this region from the air and for the further purpose of photographing from the air the whole of the Highland Lakes Region. A relief model of the region was made available from which certain control points could be determined. All passable roads, Federal, State, and county, were traveled and utilized as a means of access to isolated areas that were reached on foot. Boats were made available to examine the area from the water, and numerous inspection trips were accompanied by Federal, State, and county officials to point out areas of special interest.

In considering what might wisely be included within the boundaries of a recreational area on the Colorado, we have not fixed upon any arbitrary proportion of area to be included with respect to population existing or contemplated. Areas and proposed boundaries were selected solely on their own merits. Natural conditions such as present use, change in topography, forest cover, inaccessibility, or exceptional scenic qualities and the likelihood that the area as proposed would produce greater returns if used for park purposes than if used for private occupancy were some of the determining factors.

When general conclusions were reached the proposed area was plotted on a map and, after carefully considering the proposed area in relation to the existing system of State highways and the lakes themselves, taking into account existing and proposed park facilities within the boundary, an examination was again made of the proposed area with map in hand.

During this period of intensive study numerous State agencies were consulted in order to check conclusions reached and to correlate our findings with State and Federal information relative to the Lake Region.

It should be explained that the Lower Colorado River Authority in the early years of its program was committed to a policy of acquiring flowage rights only, where flowage rights would be sufficient for their needs: in other words, the right to flood lands necessary for the operation of

the power and flood-control program it has undertaken.

In some instances this policy has not been rigidly adhered to here of late, for certain tracts of land above the respective lake levels have been acquired in fee simple where it has been determined that such tracts were essential to the operation of the program. The lands thus held are scattered parcels, mostly in the vicinity of the Marshall Ford Reservoir. At the time of this writing something like 3,000 acres are so held by the Authority in fee simple.

It should also be explained that the Authority is expressly directed by legislative action and by a ruling of its own executive board to make available for the use of the public the entire shore line of the lakes which it has created. The public is entitled to the use of the lakes and of a narrow strip of land which lies between the crest elevation of the dams and the actual level of the lakes, whatever it may be at a given time. However, this privilege to use the lake shores is really applicable to Lake Buchanan and Marshall Ford Reservoir only, since these two lakes have been designed as storage reservoirs and are subject to considerable fluctuation (as much as 70 feet).

Inks Lake and Lake Austin, which were developed primarily as power-generating lakes, will be maintained at a constant level (with a variation of from 6 inches to 12 inches fluctuation). This automatically means that the two most desirable lakes for intensive recreational use (Inks and Austin) will be available to the public, insofar as water surface is concerned, but the shore line will be so narrow that it will not function as an area of public use, even though authorized.

With this and a great deal more basic information of a similar nature, it was then possible to approach the problem as it resolved itself in the following terms. Considered in the light of municipal, county, State, and National Parks, existing and proposed, in Texas and in adjoining States, does the newly created Lakes Region on the Colorado River possess any outstanding scenic and recreational qualities that would recommend this region for acquisition and development as a major unit in the Texas Park and Recreational System? If so, what are these qualities and how can they best be made available to the public?



Accessibility, without destruction of scenic qualities could be accomplished by the development of a road system following parkway standards. Existing State and county road locations could be incorporated to provide as much as 40 percent of such a system.



This liquid wealth can never he dissipated so long as rain continues to fall. It is a potential source of inspiration and pleasure that will increase in value with each passing year, if action is taken to preserve it.



Many miles of secondary county roads and ranch lanes now exist within the suggested boundary. Because of flooding of the lake areas many of these roads and lanes no longer serve a useful purpose. They could be woven into an ideal system of horse trails at very little cost.

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

It is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to condense the findings of this survey into a brief description of the State's attractions for persons interested in going to new places and in seeing new things.

It is generally known that four of the seven great physiographic divisions of the North American Continent meet within the boundaries of Texas and that as a result it is possible to find within the State nearly all of the extremes of climate and geography to be found elsewhere on the continent.

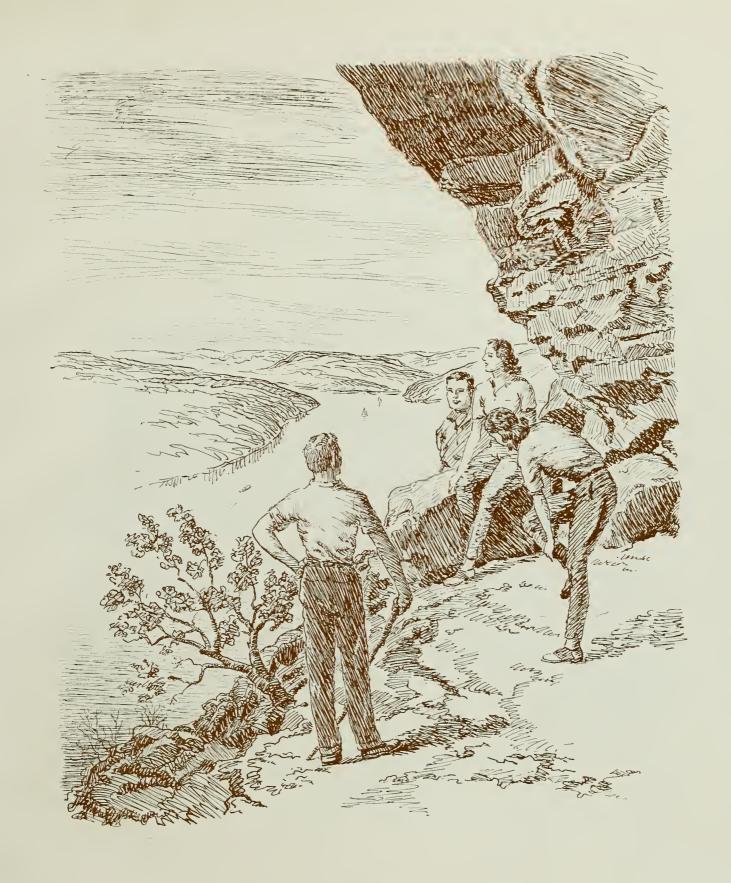
Figuratively speaking, Texas assumes the proportions of a Gulliver in the family of States to which it belongs. Facing eastward it sits upon a boundary that is wrinkled and folded by the

windings of the Rio Grande River along its southern border which coincides with the northern boundary of Old Mexico. From the tip of its toes that dip into the Gulf of Mexico to the top of its head tucked in between the States of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado, one may find mountains, desert lands, and plains, forests, hills, and coastal swamps, seashores, and rolling prairie. All types of topography are extensive wherever they are found. Climates that are frigid, arid, and subtropical may be encountered, depending upon the season, altitude, and region in which one might find oneself at a particular time.

Such elemental factors as are listed above are quite important in the selection of park lands. Stretches of shore line and numerous islands along the Gulf Coast have been surveyed to determine if certain of these coastal areas might not some day be acquired and developed as a National Seashore.



This organized camp, although invisible, is the summertime home of hundreds of boy scouts on Lake Austin. Thousands more could be housed as inconspicuously if room for them is acquired.



Foot trails to many points of interest have been provided and others could be developed that would carry those who prefer to travel the back country on foot into many new and different places of interest.



A scenic park road system of some two hundred miles would make use of road locations such as this, climbing to the hilltops and skirting the shore line of the lakes to make accessible the entire lake region.



Hundreds of miles of shore line, numerous bays and inlets, deep and shallow water both cool and warm, should provide fishing that would be second to none. Provisions have been made to keep all of the lakes well stocked and regulated to insure a constant supply of fish indigenous to the region.

Current consideration is being given to this possibility.

Within the past few years—to be specific, since 1933—the State has embarked upon a program of developing numerous park areas (32 at the present time) in a wide variety of settings and in widely separated locations. These in turn have been supplemented by some four hundred roadside picnic areas that have been developed by the State Highway Department. All in all, Texas has made a very good beginning in providing recreational facilities for its people.

What might be termed a period of sampling the requirements and park consciousness of the State has all but been completed, and a second phase in the State's park program is now presented for consideration.

It should be remembered, however, that the State has no single agency designated as an official representative to handle its programs of park and recreation resources.

State Parks, State Historical Parks, Fish Hatcheries, Roadside Parks, State Forests

represent five separate activities that operate and contribute to the State's recreational facilities, and, while they are allied in the type and kind of service rendered, they are administered under as many different State departments.

Thirty-two existing State Parks that are intensively used, with a combined area of approximately 28,000 acres (land and water) supplemented by 400 roadside parks, are indicative of a widespread interest and popular demand for such facilities.

Statistics

In the few short years that these facilities have been available it has been conservatively estimated that more than 2,000,000 persons annually use them. It has also been estimated that some \$255,000,000 was expended by recreational travelers in the State during the past year of 1939.

When it is considered that this sum was ex-Pended by the public in a State that has extended very limited financial support to its park program (considering its size, wealth and population) and to the publicizing of its recreational facilities on a State-wide basis, the possible yearly expenditure assumes sizable proportions when one considers what might be accomplished by a concerted effort to support and publicize on a broad scale this source of pleasure and income.

Existing Facilities

Such activities as swimming, fishing, picnicking, camping, boating, and golf on a limited scale constitute the principal recreational facilities provided by the current park program. While this might appear to be a fairly wide range of such activities, it is comparatively restricted when one considers the full range of such possibilities.

In the development of areas acquired, the park program of the State is limited in the facilities both in type and in extent that have been or can be provided. The existing system has been developed primarily on a basis of providing what is referred to as day-use facilities; that is to say, development predicated on the assumption that persons using the parks will leave their homes, visit their point of destination, and return to their homes within the same day. A limited number of cabins have been provided for persons wishing to extend their holidays for more than a day, and the fact that this facility is continually overtaxed is evidence of its popularity.

Such agencies as Girl- and Boy-Scout organizations, 4-H Clubs, home-demonstration clubs and other similar groups have likewise continually overtaxed existing facilities for organized camping, which are now quite limited.

These observations are recorded merely to indicate a trend and to show what has been provided in response to a demonstrated need. In no sense should they be considered as criticism of a program that has been formulated in large part out of lands acquired as gifts to the State and developed in large part with Federal assistance.

It is believed that the State should take early cognizance of this situation and approach its State park problem in much the same way that it has approached similar problems of providing roads,



Ideal camp sites by the water's edge or in the hills, isolated yet convenient to many points of interest, are one of the many assets of the Lake Region.

schools, sanitary facilities, and other services to its people, where they are concerned as a group. Comparisons are rarely if ever conclusive, but it should not be overlooked that Florida, California, Michigan, the New England region, and other States have made much profit from selling their climate, scenery, and recreational facilities to the American public. Texas might well profit by their experiences.

Three Major Park Regions

From a comprehensive investigation of the State it is evident that 'there are three principal regions within the State's boundaries which would lend themselves to park and recreational use on a large scale. With a very fine nucleus of State Parks that have been developed on a comparatively small scale it is to these three larger areas that we should look for areas commensurate with the State's size, requirements, and future needs.

Padre Island and certain other areas along the Gulf Coast in the east, the Big Bend region of the southwest and the Hill Country located to the west of the Balconies Escarpment in the central portion of the State are the three regions falling into what might be termed a "preferred classification." Both Padre Island and the Big Bend country are automatically eliminated from further serious consideration in this discussion since they are now in the process of development or may possibly be developed as major recreation areas in the not too distant future. While other regions throughout the State lend themselves to such activities as grazing, lumbering, farming, etc., the Hill Country remains as the only large region possessing a sufficient number of qualifications that are considered essential to a park development of more than local or minor importance.

From what is now known of the State's park potentialities it is questionable if there are any areas beyond those previously referred to (Padre Island and Big!Bend)—Palo Dura Canyon being one possible exception—that would qualify as areas of national importance.

It must be said in fairness to these three areas that each, in its own right, possesses qualities

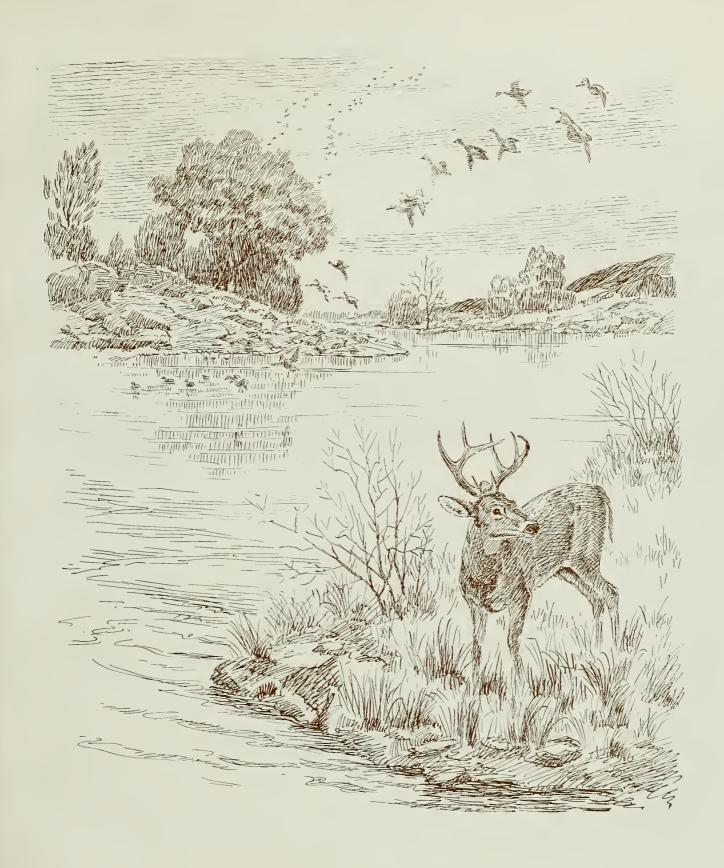
that for one or more good reasons stamp it as unique in its own particular way. It must be said also that from the standpoint of recreation in all its phases, each has its shortcomings. It was with a view to searching out some large area in the State that would lend itself to a program that would satisfy all park and recreational requirements that other areas throughout the State were inspected and eliminated one by one and the Hill Country on the Colorado River finally accepted as a region holding the greatest possibilities for further and more detailed investigation. All regions with the exception of the three areas previously noted that were covered by our investigations were found to be lacking in features considered essential for good park character, potentialities for development, or for other equally good cause.

For these reasons and for other reasons which we hope will become increasingly clear we have concentrated our investigations upon a portion of the Hill Country along the Colorado River west of Austin—the area which is referred to in this report as "The Highland Lakes of Texas."

Choice of a Name

"The Highland Lakes of Texas" is not altogether an idle catch-phrase to describe the lakes and the adjacent land areas in their vicinity. On the contrary, it is a term which seems tersely adequate and a little more expressive of this portion of the Hill Country than if we were to attempt a lake-by-lake and area-by-area description of the region with which we are dealing.

Lake Buchanan, Inks Lake, Marshall Ford Reservoir, and Lake Austin are a bit more cumbersome to remember and, since this survey concerns itself with all four lakes and the adjoining countryside, it seemed simpler to devise some terminology that would be all-inclusive in its description. The fact that all four lakes are located in the Hill Country and that the difference in elevation from the highest (Lake Buchanan, elevation 300) is some 700 feet—which, incidentally, is greater than the entire fall of the Mississippi River—seemed sufficient excuse in itself to refer to them as the ''Highland Lakes.''



Large areas of water, forest cover on a rugged topography, plus the seclusion that would be afforded in an area of sufficient size, would guarantee the successful establishment of a refuge and wildlife reservoir for all future time.



HOTO BY ELLISON, AUSTIN, TEX

The State Capitol building which appears on the horizon serves to emphasize the central location of the area in question.

Geographic Location

Geographically the Highland Lakes Region is located in the approximate center of the State, generally to the west and north of the Capital City of Austin. For some time the Hill Country has been known as a summer vacation land, with the town of Kerrville serving as the principal center of this activity. The country round about Kerrville has been developed over a period of years by private enterprise which has provided some of the most popular vacation and organized camp and guest-ranch accommodations in the South.

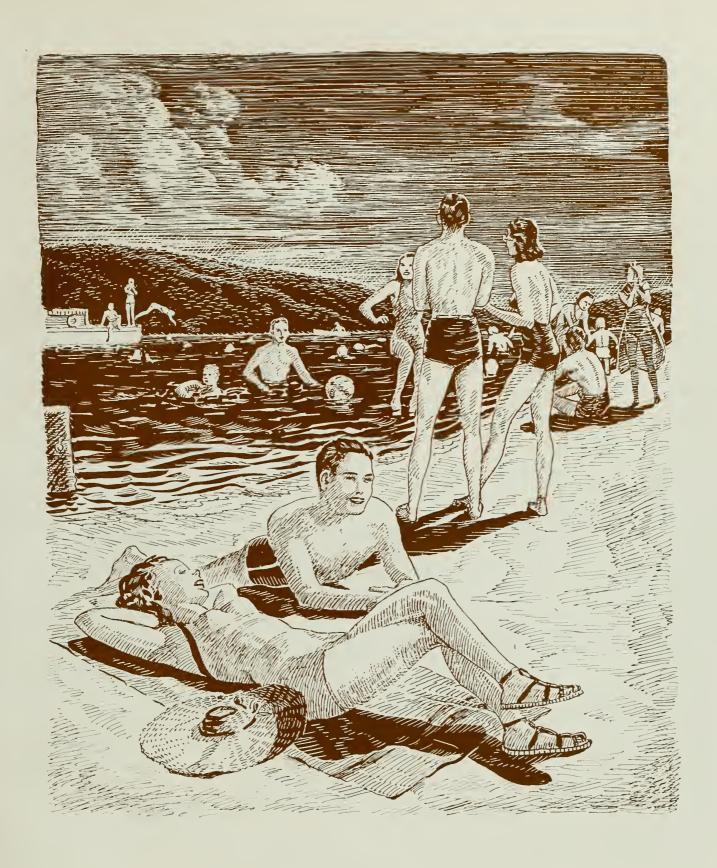
Blanco, Kerrville, and Garner are the names of three State parks already developed near communities of the same names, and while they serve a local need they are not planned or considered to be of State-wide importance.

The drawing which appears opposite page 4 in this report indicates an area of some 416,000 acres which has been carved out of the Hill

Country as a potential recreational area possessing qualities in abundance that recommend it as worthy of acquisition for park and recreational purposes.

Accessibility

The "Lake Region" is accessible by automobile from practically every quarter of the compass. Persons coming to this region may approach and cross it by using State Highways 66 and 29, which highways in turn are serviced by an ever-expanding network of Federal, State, and county roads throughout the State. A commercial landing field just east of Austin and an emergency field within the area itself make it accessible to those traveling by air. The chain of four lakes extending throughout the region's entire length for more than 100 miles serves as an almost continuous waterway and as a means of access by boat to the central regions of the area in a manner that is unique.



Beaches of white sand on lakes of clear water make for ideal bathing. This combination appears at numerous places along the newly created lake shores in scenic surroundings that would be difficult if not impossible to find elsewhere in the State.

For those who would travel by rail, the Southern Pacific Railroad may be used to reach the central portions of the Lake Region. Rail accommodations are provided from Austin to Llano by way of Marble Falls, located in the middle portion of the proposed recreational area.

Climate

The average yearly temperature of the Hill Country is recorded as from 10 to 13 degrees cooler than the major portion of the State. An average precipitation of 30 inches, a relatively cool climate, and the fact that *all* parks now in operation throughout the State are open and used throughout the entire year are indicative of a favorable twelve months' climate for park use. The climate is particularly favorable for year-round recreational activities in the central portion of the State.

Population

A review of population trends over a period of 80 years reveals that only California and Utah have shown a greater rate of growth than Texas over this same period of time.

Reliable estimates also indicate that the State's present population of approximately 6,000,000 will be increased to more than 8,500,000 by 1960 if the present rate of expansion is maintained. It has also been reliably estimated that 2,000,000 persons, principally State residents, will make some use of the State's park and recreational facilities within the current year.

These figures indicate a trend which signifies a possible increase of nearly 40 percent in the State's population within the next 20 years.

Obviously this increase will be accompanied by a proportionate increase in travel for pleasure as well as business reasons and the State would do well to anticipate this addition to its population by providing every possible facility to receive an influx of new arrivals, from a recreational as well as from a housing standpoint.

A major recreation area in the Highland Lake region would help greatly in this regard.

The Lakes

The following data are quoted from information furnished by the Lower Colorado River Authority:

Lake Buchanan

Area covered by lake	23,000 acres
Maximum depth of lake	132 feet
Maximum length of lake	32 miles
Maximum width of lake	8 miles
Elevation at dam above sea level	1,025.5 feet
Shore line around lake	. 192 miles

Inks Lake

Area covered by lake	900 acres
Maximum depth of lake	60 feet
Maximum length of lake	2.8 miles
Maximum width of lake	0.57 mile
Elevation of dam above sea level	922 feet
Shore line around lake	40 miles

Marshall Ford Reservoir

Area covered by lake	000 acres
Maximum depth of lake	225 feet
Maximum length of lake	51 miles
Maximum width of lake	8.5 miles
Elevation at dam above sea level	750 feet
Shore line around lake	270 miles

Lake Austin

Area covered by lake	,000 acres
Maximum depth of lake	30 feet
Maximum length of lake	20 miles
Maximum width of lake	. 0.5 mile
Elevation at dam above sea level	. 493 feet
Shore line around lake	100 miles

Provisions have been made to raise the Marshall Ford Dam seventy feet above that recorded in the tabulation. By this increase in height the acreage of water surface and miles of shore line on the Marshall Ford Reservoir will be materially increased and will create a total for all four lakes of approximately 60,000 acres of water surface and approximately 700 miles of shore line.

Some questions have been presented which indicate that some concern exists regarding the operative life of the Highland Lakes for flood-control and power-generation purposes. In this connection it can be said with authority that the lakes will continue to function in these capacities for an indefinite number of years in the future. According



A State that has many more golf courses than all but two other States in the Union and has produced several champions of the game needs no urging to appreciate what two or three championship courses developed in the Hill Country would mean. All of the essentials for champion golf courses (soil, topography, forest cover, and unlimited water) are to be found in the vicinity of Lake Buchanan and Lake Austin.



PHOTO BY ELLISON, AUSTIN, TEX

Huge overhanging cliffs with strange stalactite formations are to be found on the tributary streams within the Highland Lakes Region. Here geology may be studied in one of its many interesting forms.

to the most reliable sources available all of the lakes will, so long as the dams continue in place, have a sufficient depth of water to function in the manner for which they were created, which consequently means that there will be provided ideal lakes for park and recreational purposes. As previously explained, the lakes are publicly owned and are available at all times for public use. More than 60,000 acres of the required total acreage is now public property in the form of lakes, but sufficient public lands must be acquired to make these lakes accessible to the public else a great part of their value will be lost.

Relation to Existing Park System

In its size, location, and attractiveness the Highland Lakes Region might be likened to the sun, with a constellation of smaller parks clustered about it at varying locations and distances throughout the State. If the State were to develop a large outstanding area in this region where a great variety of facilities could be found it would serve as a magnet to attract great numbers who might not otherwise visit smaller areas, even though they were more accessible and convenient to reach. Thus in its ability to



Well-developed, organized camps are continually overtaxed wherever they have been established as public or private developments in every part of the State. Here sufficient room is available and to spare to provide vacation homes for thousands of boys and girls.

create an interest in parks and things recreational, the small or satellite parks would very likely receive an increased rather than a decreased patronage.

The Land

The Hill Country is composed of numerous hills and low mountains, covered with a growth of cedar, live oaks, and deciduous trees of a wide variety, with a range of elevation from 500 to 1,700 feet above sea level.

Bald granite protrusions are found principally in Burnet and Llano Counties, with a greater part of the land area suitable only for the grazing of goats or other small stock. Not more than 8 percent of the area included in the proposed boundary is given over to cultivated crops at the present time.

It is estimated (based upon land values as determined by recent purchases in the region) that land values would vary from \$3.50 to \$25 an acre, and would approximate on the average \$10 to \$12 an acre to acquire. This estimate is believed to be conservative in the light of recent transactions. In this connection, experience leads us to believe that large tracts may be made available as outright donations from groups and private individuals which would materially reduce the average price per acre.

It would seem reasonable to assume that a comprehensive park program for the Lake Region might expect that all lands now held by the Lower Colorado River Authority, all county park lands, and lands acquired by the city of Austin for park purposes would be eventually transferred to the authority selected to administer such a program if the State were to sponsor it.

At the present time some 8,000 acres are now held in public ownership by various agencies, exclusive of 1,200 acres held by the State Parks Board. By combining the acreage of the existing lakes with the acreage of the land that is available, or potentially so, it will be found that close to 70,000 acres of surface are in public ownership that might serve as a nucleus for the addition of remaining lands needed to accomplish the objectives of the plan.

SOME NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Previous to the creation of the Colorado chain of lakes in the Hill Country, the gorge of the Colorado could hardly be called spectacular in scenic quality.

However, now that a large portion of the riverway has undergone a transformation that has so completely changed bottomlands and hillsides into lakes, the region has acquired certain scenic qualities that are not to be found elsewhere in the Water and particularly water in large quantities such as is here provided in a scenic borderland of perpetual green hills cannot be overestimated in evaluating this region as a potential recreational area. Our investigations reveal that there are very few natural lakes of any size in Texas. Sabine Lake and Green Lake are really areas of the Gulf of Mexico, while Caddo Lake lies both in Texas and in Louisiana. Water tanks, springs, and other bodies of water, scattered over the State, including many shallow salt lakes, possess little, if any, recreational value.

Existing-Proposed Park Facilities

As previously mentioned, several tracts of land, all with shore frontage, have been acquired for development by various State, county, or other local agencies. These areas vary in size from five acres to approximately one thousand acres and are distributed along the shores of all four of the principal lakes recently created and included in the recommended plan.

Viewed objectively and from a purely realistic standpoint the existing and proposed program of park and recreational developments in the Highland Lakes Region is proof in itself that a tremendous interest now exists which has prompted the formulation of these existing miscellaneous park programs.

The composite drawing showing existing and proposed park facilities of the region demonstrates that the planning of these park facilities has been the result of inadequate and uncoordinated planning efforts. (See illustration opposite page 64.)



Quiet water in large areas, shaded banks that will eventually be dripping with Spanish moss from live-oak trees, hillsides covered with redbud, dogwood, and mountain laurel all contribute to make the Highland Lakes a place that will be greatly in demand by persons who go canoeing.

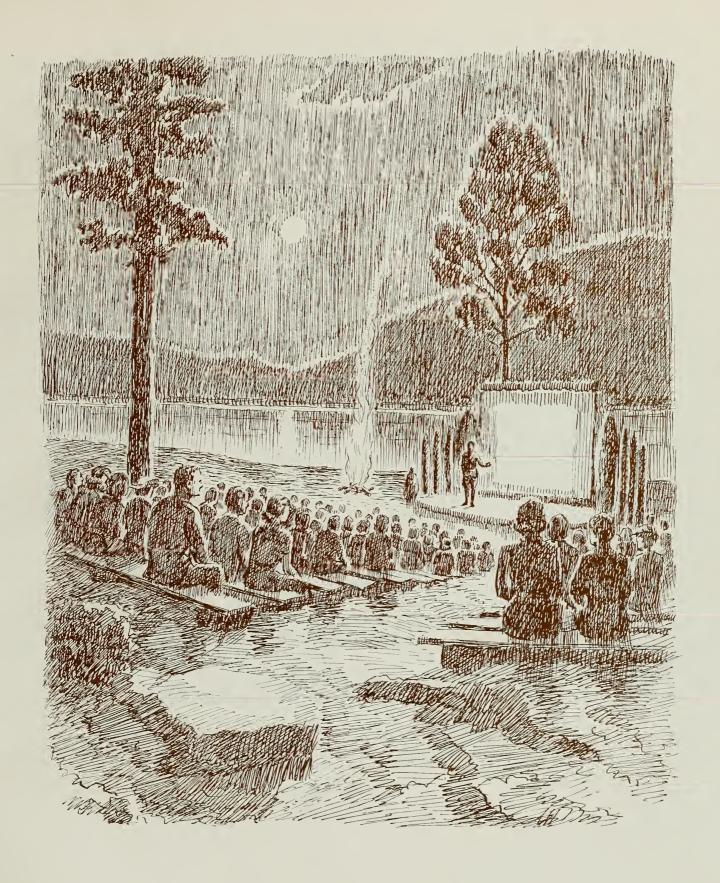


All things are relative and, in a country that is so generally flat, even slight elevations in the topography such as this provide vantage points from which to view the surrounding countryside.

According to the present scheme of things, 10 public agencies (private developers were not interviewed) are now actively engaged in developments of a park nature that are in no particular way related to each other. Approximately 80 miles of park roads have been constructed and 130 additional miles are contemplated as approach roads or as actual park roads in various small areas throughout the region. More than 200 miles of roads as contemplated by the present program are considered altogether excessive to serve the limited acreage devoted to or contemplated for park use. In some instances 1 mile

of road has been developed to serve 1 acre of park land. This proportion of more than 3 acres of road surface to 1 acre of park land could hardly be considered as a practical or an economical solution to the problem.

The present park-development program of the Lake Region is predicated on the assumption that this region is of local interest only. Numerous inquiries from every portion of the State that have been received by the Lower Colorado River Authority as to the availability of this area should serve to nullify such an assumption. The data which has been incorporated graphi-



Education is not always obtained from books. Campfire lectures have proved to be one of the most popular features of park educational programs throughout the country.

cally in the composite drawing opposite page 64, have been assembled from answers submitted in reply to a questionnaire that was distributed to the various agencies engaged in providing park and recreational facilities within the area under consideration. For those who will take the time to analyze these data there is to be found much information of an enlightening nature.

From a park-planning viewpoint the results obtained and the results to be expected from such a program would compare favorably with the degree of efficiency and success that would have resulted in authorizing 10 authorites instead of 1 power and conservation authority to operate along the same 100-mile stretch of the Colorado.

The Caverns

It is not generally known that the Longhorn Caverns are the third largest caverns in the United States and that they have been developed as the main feature of a State Park of the same name in the Hill Country overlooking the Colorado River, Inks Lake, and Lake Buchanan. The administration building of Longhorn Caverns, illustrated on pages 58 and 59, is considered one of the finest examples of park architecture in the State, Several thousand persons annually visit this attraction, which has been made safe and easily accessible with a lighting system that might well serve as a model for similar improvements in caves operating under National Park Service administration. This unique and distinct cave attraction would unquestionably serve to increase the drawing power of the lake country if the region in which it is located were properly developed and publicized as a special feature in a large recreational development.

Fishing

Fishing on all four lakes has been pronounced excellent by those who have tried it and are qualified to know. According to the State's Fish, Game, and Oyster Commission, the waters of the Highland Lakes are ideal for the rearing of fish indigenous to the region. At the present time the Federal Government is operating a large

fish hatchery on the shores of Inks Lake and it is their hope and plan to develop the Highland Lakes into one of the finest fishing grounds in the State. The prospect of 60,000 acres of good fishing water should be of particular interest to those who do not have access to the stocked fishing grounds of private clubs and organizations that have leased a considerable portion of desirable fishing grounds throughout the State, thus making these private fishing grounds inaccessible to the general public.

With waters varying from 150 feet in depth to the shallow secluded lagoons that are to be found in profusion all along the various lake shores, a complete variety of indigenous fish can be and according to present plans will be successfully established. In this connection it is quite essential that uniform game laws with particular reference to fishing should be established for all of the lakes and tributary waters within the area as it may eventually be developed.

Water Sports

In this region of scenic hills and mountains, covered with a type of vegetation that keeps them mantled in a cloak of greenery for full twelve months a year, are to be found ideal waters for practically every type of water sport that has ever been devised.

Boating, canoeing, swimming, aquaplaning, water polo, and sailing on Lake Buchanan, where prevailing winds from the cap-rock plateau are fairly constant, are listed as a few of the many possible uses to which the lake waters so admirably lend themselves. The quiet waters of Lake Austin present ideal conditions for all manner of small water craft and a perfect course for eightoar shells, sculling, and similar intercollegiate rowing events.

With the progressive attitude that has been so pronouncedly exhibited by the numerous colleges and universities throughout Texas, it seems reasonable to suggest that a perfect course for all manner of competitive water sports, so conveniently located in the State's geographical and population center, might become the yearly rendezvous for regattas of more than local significance.



"Bowling on the green" is but one of many similar less strenuous sports that have developed a widespread appeal and popularity among young and old alike.

Trails

It is interesting to consider the possibilities that exist for the construction of trails both for hiking parties and for those who would prefer to ride in the lake country. There exist today, within the suggested boundary study for this region, long stretches of county roads and many more miles of lanes serving various ranches that could, with some study, be woven into a magnificent chain of trails of both kinds.

This objective could be accomplished by the simple expedient of preserving certain of the existing roads and trails that are considered unessential to such a system; obliterating others that are superfluous, and linking the remainder into a planned system by the construction of new sections necessary to complete the plan.

Trail construction is relatively inexpensive even in rugged country. In the hills and in particular along the lake shores the topography is such that hundreds of miles of both foot and horse trails could be developed for a relatively small cost.

Camping

Organized groups of various ages are more and more seeking large areas where organized camps are provided. The lake shores and nearby mountains of the Highland Lake Region abound in suitable areas that could be inexpensively developed into attractive camp sites.

Guest Ranches

To the south of Inks Lake and for a distance of several miles on both sides of the Colorado there exists an area of several thousand acres, referred to locally as Hoover Valley. A small part of this valley is devoted to cultivating crops, but for the most part the land is given over to the grazing of goats, a few sheep, and a limited number of cattle. Being mostly flat to rolling topography, covered with mesquite and cedar trees, with access to the river, lakes, hills, and mountains that surround it, the area would lend itself admirably to the development of a very fine guest-ranch settlement. Texas need not be reminded of the value of such

an enterprise, especially if the Highland Lakes Region were to be developed as a major recreational area.

Certain sections of the State are already doing a thriving business in playing host to those who prefer their vacations with a real western flavor, and under proper guidance Hoover Valley might well become one of the leading guest-ranch settlements in the State, if not in the entire country. Every element to make it so is to be found in the Hoover Valley at present.

Golf

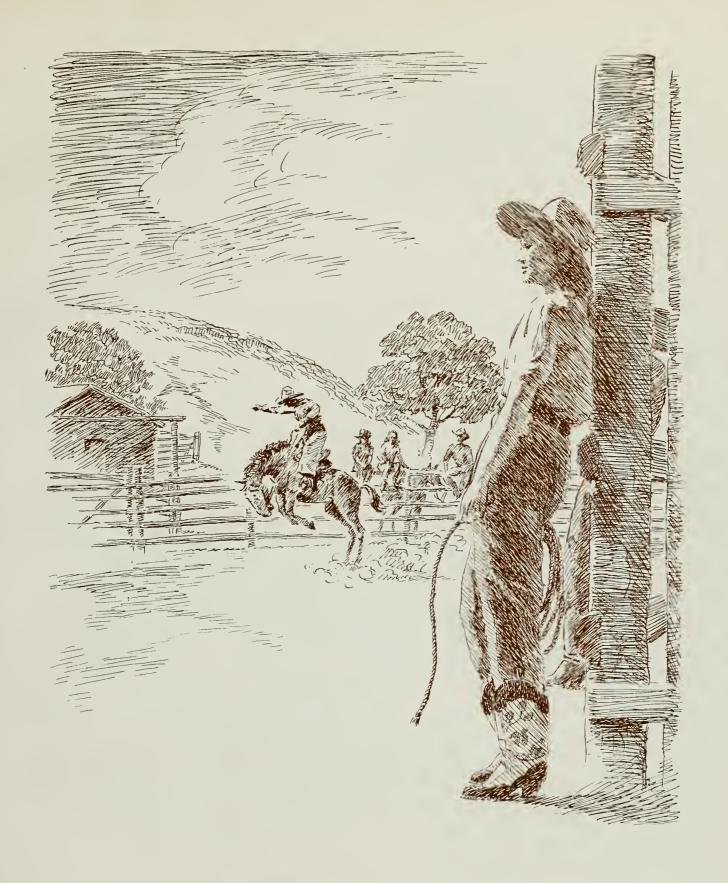
With but 2 States—New York and Illinois—having more golf courses than Texas, there is little need to advance the cause of a sport where it is established as a major all-year-round activity. At the present time there are more than 270 established courses in Texas. On the east shores of Lake Buchanan, certain areas in the vicinity of Marble Falls and a tract close to Austin have been found that could be developed into courses of championship caliber. Water in unlimited quantities, so essential to the proper maintenance of green and fairway conditions, is of more than passing importance in a region of 30 inches yearly rainfall.

Polo

Texas has produced some of the country's outstanding polo players and polo ponies, and polo like golf needs no support in declaring its popularity among Texas people.

Polo fields, like golf courses, depend in large part for their proper development and maintenance upon topography, soil, and water. A superb amphitheater, in a setting completely surrounded by a range of wooded hills, exists in a location easy of access and centrally located within the suggested boundary.

Although racing is forbidden by existing State legislation it may be that as time goes on the wishes of the people may change to permit horse racing; in this case the area now conceived as a polo field could be easily enlarged to include fine track facilities at relatively little cost.



"Guest ranches"—with all that the term implies—amount to a major industry in numerous sections of the country. Texas would know how to handle a program of this nature if areas in the Highland Lakes Region that are ideally suited to it were to be so developed.

Educational Aspects

Campfire lectures, nature classes, open-air concerts, photography, reunions, and gatherings of various kinds so popular in this State are but a few recreational activities that would probably be given early consideration in any such development as is herein suggested. Natural amphitheaters in locations easy of access are numerous throughout the Lake Region.

For Those With Cars

It seems to be an American characteristic that prompts most of us to view our scenery from a moving automobile. One of the most important features suggested for the proposed area and one that would require considerable detailed planning would be the development of a scenic park drive, consisting of a major loop around all four lakes and the connecting riverway. Such a system of roads would be so developed as to be readily controlled at a limited number of strategic locations. As a nucleus for such a system certain stretches of second- and third-class roads now in the State and county road systems might, with some improvement as to grade, alignment, and sight distance, be developed as existing links in a very fine scenic park road program. Existing roads that have been designated as suitable for inclusion in such a system were deemed acceptable only after all passable roads in the region were inspected. By utilizing some 80 to 90 miles of existing road locations and by the building of approximately 100 additional miles a complete loop system could be developed. Such a proposal does not compare unfavorably with the several programs of park road construction now being developed by the ten agencies previously referred to. As a matter of fact, such a system would make available the entire region instead of the few isolated areas that will be served under the present program.

By referring to the perspective drawing (opposite page 4) which records boundary and road proposals, it will be noted that such a system lends itself quite readily to the development of one minor loop at a time, by utilizing certain existing highway locations that cross the region below Lake Buchanan, and by connecting with a

28½ ft. lighted walk and highway across the 270 ft. top of the Marshall Ford Dam.

Today thousands of visitors to the Lake Country are crowding onto roads that are neither safe as determined by present-day standards of construction nor particularly scenic in character. In the development of such a system as is suggested, it would be entirely possible to take advantage of bottomlands for the location of certain sections. Other sections would climb to hill-side and ridge locations in order to take advantage of vistas and views heretofore not possible of attainment and at the same time adhere to standards of construction that would meet present-day requirements.

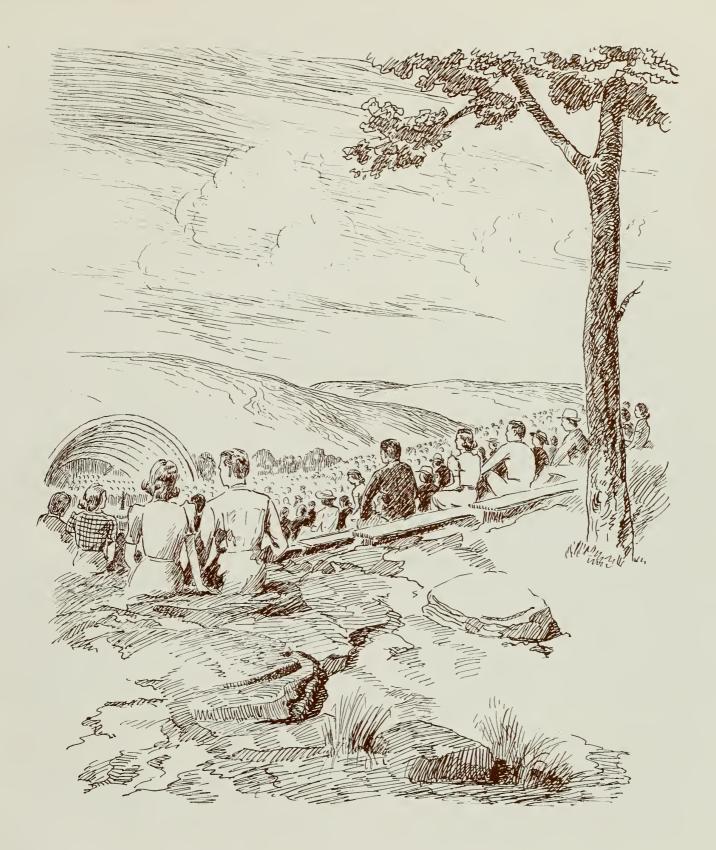
While numerous portions of the existing State highway system throughout the Hill Country are in themselves quite scenic in character, it can be stated with assurance that a loop system of park roads properly developed in the Highland Lakes Region would compare more favorably with the keenest scenic competition that the remainder of the State could offer.

This statement is clearly not without foundation when one considers that such a system of park roads for the Lake Region as is herein envisioned would make available to the motoring public an ever-changing panorama of greenclad hills and mountains interspersed with vistas of many lakes from numerous vantage points.

Wildlife

With an annual economic value of \$94,000,000, Texas wildlife is estimated to be three times that of the second ranking State, according to current reports of the U. S. Forest Service.

It may seem unnecessary to advocate the establishment of a game and wildlife refuge in the Lake Region of the Hill Country when the State has demonstrated so effectively the principles of good husbandry of this valuable resource. However, game and wildlife do not last forever without proper protection and with more than 1,200 shooting preserves scattered throughout the State, utilizing more than 4,500,000 acres of land set aside for this purpose, there is definite need for reservoirs in which wildlife could and would be protected.



Amphitheaters, where large assemblies may gather, are becoming more popular throughout the country. Texas climate and almost continually guaranteed sunshine are factors that would favor an amphitheater on a large scale in the center of the State. Most people prefer to take their entertainment and recreation sitting down.

An area of rugged forest-clad countryside close to one-half million acres of land and water surface and centrally located in the State would prove ideal for this purpose.

With an area of sufficient size set aside under protective custody, wildlife indigenous to the region would soon increase to the point where there would be an excess, which would filter out into the surrounding countryside as a source of continual replenishment.

SOME OBJECTIONABLE FEATURES .

If it is determined that the Highland Lakes Region shall be developed as a recreational area for the State, there are certain features that must not be overlooked in considering its parklike and recreational aspects.

For the past few years the Federal Government has been engaged in a program of cedar eradication which, if continued at its present rate, would soon nullify much of the region's desirability as a recreational area.

Several thousand acres of cedar breaks are cut over or burned annually with a view to increasing the grazing quality of the land. This practice has resulted in the creation of great scars of barrenness on the mountains that will remain for years to come. One of the principal features of the entire Hill Country is a growth of cedars intermingled with live oaks and deciduous trees of many kinds and it would be unfortunate to continue the present program of cedar eradication if the area is to be acquired and developed as park land.

Although wide stretches of land normally planned as lake bottoms are exposed at times, these varying shore lines even though undesirable for actual development would detract in no particular way from their value for fishing and their usefulness as elements in a wildlife refuge, and in no great measure from their scenic qualities as seen from a distance such as would be the case if a park road system were carefully located in proximity to them.

With both Lake Buchanan and the Marshall Ford Reservoir designed as water-storage and

flood-control developments it is inevitable that great stretches of their respective lake beds will be exposed as the water level fluctuates in them. This fluctuation of water level precludes the possibility of any major recreational developments on either lake shore that would function properly or with much success. The prevailing conditions of these two lake shores somewhat resemble the shore line of the ocean but do not share the regularity of the ocean's tidal action, which is constant and can be predetermined accurately. The exposed shore line of these two lakes does not add to their scenic qualities as seen at close range.

A number of commercial developments have recently been established on the west shore of Lake Buchanan and in other locations within the recommended boundaries. It is understood that other commercial developments are contemplated on the shores of the Marshall Ford Reservoir also. It is believed that time will adjust and stabilize to a certain degree this tendency to commercialize lake-shore properties but this practice should not be permitted to continue in its present unrestricted manner if the lakes and adjoining shorelands are to be acquired for the free use of all people.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

It is hardly within the purview of this survey to do more than point out and suggest in a general way some plan to develop efficiently the park potentialities of the Highland Lakes Region. This we have attempted to do in a brief, non-technical manner. In this attempt we have tried to make it clear that in the opinion of the National Park Service the Highland Lakes Region is considered to be outstanding in its park and recreational possibilities.

Four Conditions

Obviously, if the plan as presented is looked upon favorably by those in authority and qualified to take action on it, certain measures must be taken to assure its accomplishment. Our first observation would be that the proper development of the Lake Region for recreation, like its development for flood control and power, calls for a unified regional approach. Next,



Programs of active but not too strenuous recreation might well be incorporated in areas of intensive development in conjunction with organized camps and major recreation developments.

there must be established a satisfactory legal, financial, and administrative standing of the area. It is imperative that these four conditions be met in some satisfactory manner and at an early date, if worth-while accomplishments are to be realized.

There appears to be no need for a program that is exclusively public or one that is exclusively State-controlled in its general aspect. The size and extent of the Highland Lakes Region are such that various types of development and operation may be worked out under a general plan.

It is believed that the State Parks Board is eminently well qualified to assume the responsibility for such a program if its authority is broadened (and its administrative powers are concentrated) by legislative action. It is to be expected that any State-directed program that is new and different in its aspects will pass through a period of experimentation when first established, and, as time proves or disproves its worth, legislation will be reviewed and adjusted to meet current needs. In this connection ways and means of adjusting appropriations to an approved program should be found. It is hardly to be expected that a yearly appropriation of approximately one cent per year per person, based upon recent appropriations and population figures, would be sufficient to properly take care of a park program expanded to include a recreational area in the Highland Lakes Region.

Ways and Means

Ways and means have been found whereby lands and funds were forthcoming for the power and flood-control program of the Colorado. No doubt ways and means could be found whereby the recreational resources of this Lake Region could be acquired, developed, and made available to the people also.

The right of eminent domain is sometimes justifiably exercised and while it should be used only as a last resort the authority to exercise this right should be on the statute books of the State, if the State is to acquire park lands at a reasonable cost. As a matter of record it might be pointed out that numerous other States have exercised

this right to acquire hundreds of thousands of acres of park and forest lands, sometimes by the issuance of bonds placed before their citizens for approval.

Of all known methods that have been used by other States to acquire forest, park, and recreational lands the most satisfactory and in the long run the most expedient method has proved to be the issuance of bonds.

California, Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts have all devoted large sums of money to such purposes on the assumption that park lands and forest lands are as essential to the public welfare as are roads and schools.

Preservation of Public Rights

It should be repeatedly emphasized that under present circumstances the water surface and exposed shores of the lakes of this region do not belong to those who live beside them. These features belong to the people far removed—the people of Alpine and Brownsville, of Taylorsville and Amarillo—and it is considered to be the State's responsibility to protect this rightful ownership. It should also be explained that under present circumstances private owners of land bordering on these lake shores, which are publicly owned, have no more shore property rights than other State residents.

Since land held under private ownership is never safe from despoliation for private gain, there seems to be but one answer to the problem of protecting the rightful ownership of the lakes, which is to establish proprietary control of sufficient land adjoining them to assure that every citizen will be able to have access to them and enjoy his rightful privileges. Public ownership and management in perpetuity as park lands are suggested as a solution to this problem.

Cooperative Agreements

Cooperative agreements between existing State agencies that could contribute to the planning and development of the Highland Lakes Region are considered essential in an enterprise of this magnitude. The State Board of Control, State



Rowing and competitive water sports should meet with enthusiasm among the schools and universities of Texas.

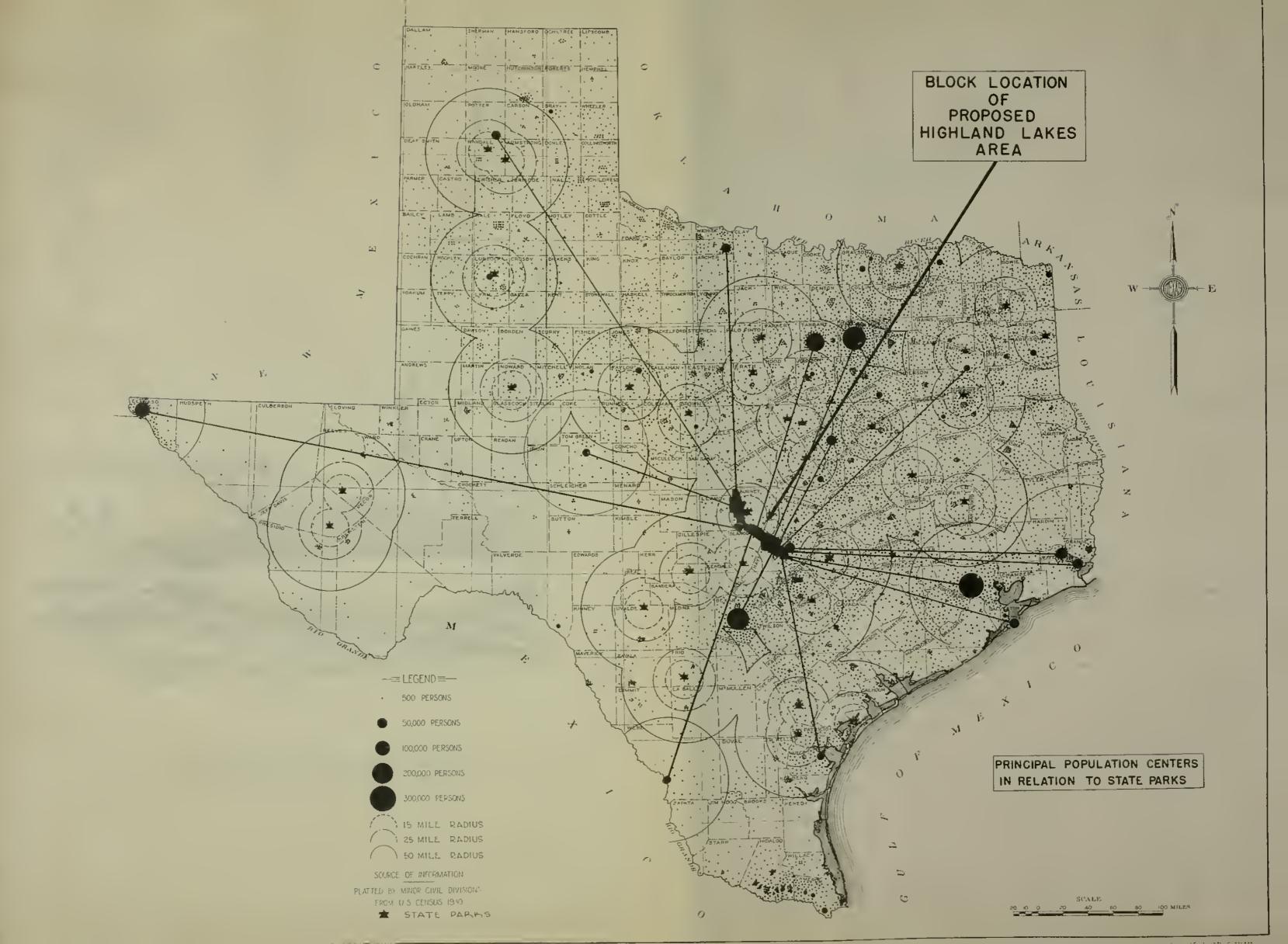
Forest Service, State Parks Board, Highway Department, and the Fish, Game and Oyster Commission could by an interchange of cooperative working agreements achieve results not otherwise attainable.

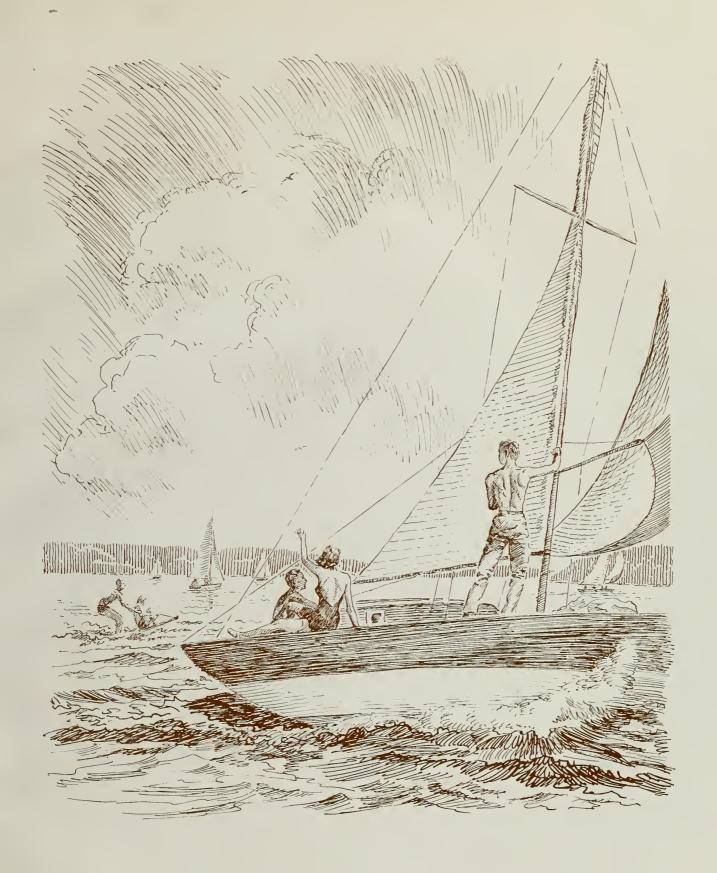
Early Action Required

The relative inaccessibility of the Hill Country in the past has saved it from much of the illconsidered exploitation that has impaired the value of some recreational areas. The rapid growth of private and commercial enterprises in desirable portions of the Lake Country, however, gives warning of a very real danger of unwise exploitation which will eventually ruin its park potentialities. If properly developed as public lands they will be conserved and improved, but if allowed to continue unrestricted there can be little question that they will be ruined for all time insofar as park and recreational qualities are concerned.

With the exception of El Paso and the Trans Pecos region, the Highland Lakes in the Hill Country are centrally located in relation to the State's principal population centers.

READOL WELL



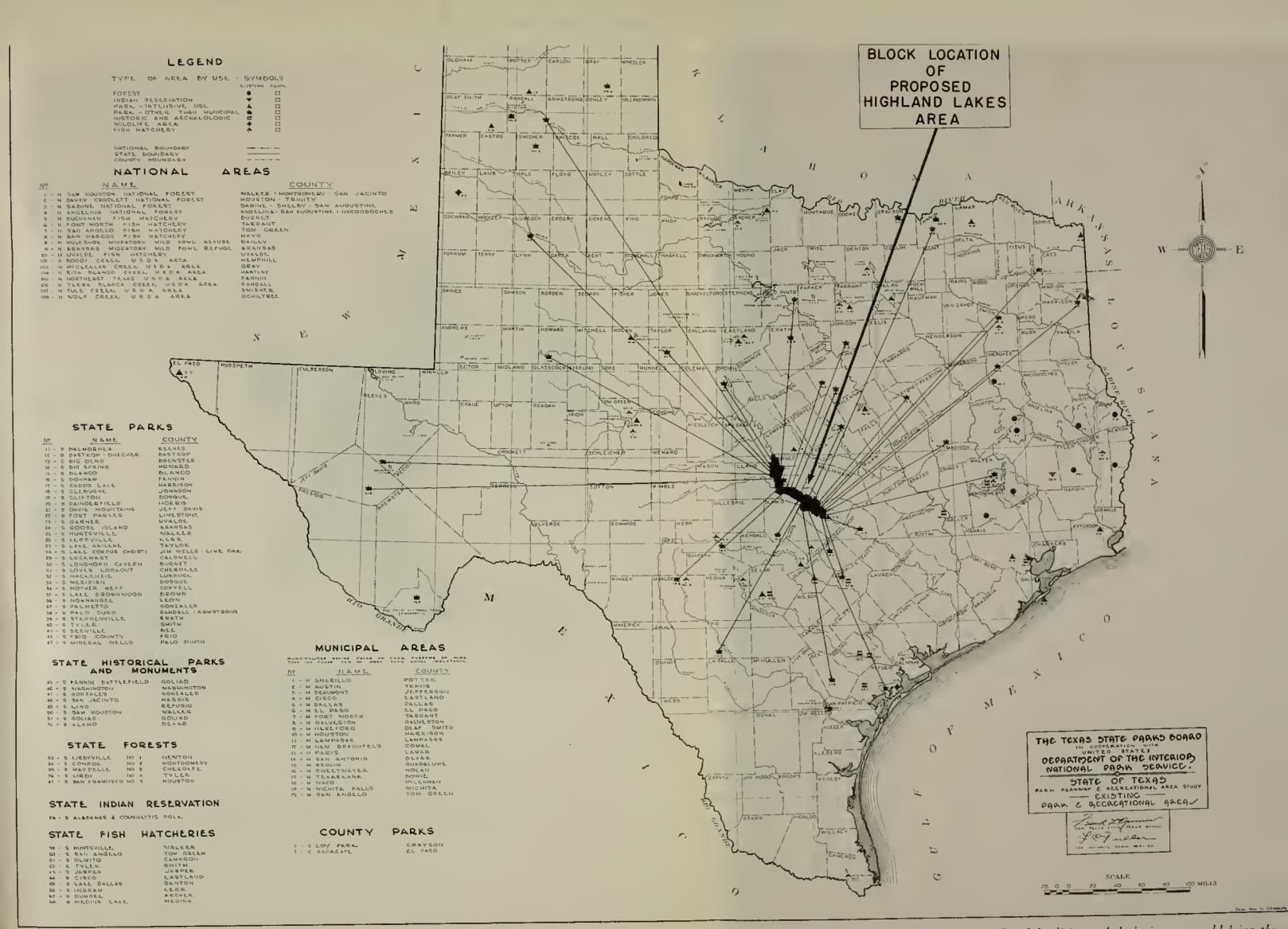


Sailing and other activities that are to be found on large bodies of water would find ideal conditions awaiting them on Lake Buchanan.

It will be seen that the Highland Lakes area is located in the park center as well as the geographic center of the State. Existing State parks now provide day use and some week-end facilities. A day's journey would bring the people from every quarter of the State to an area of sufficient size and variety of interests to encourage their staying for weeks at a time.

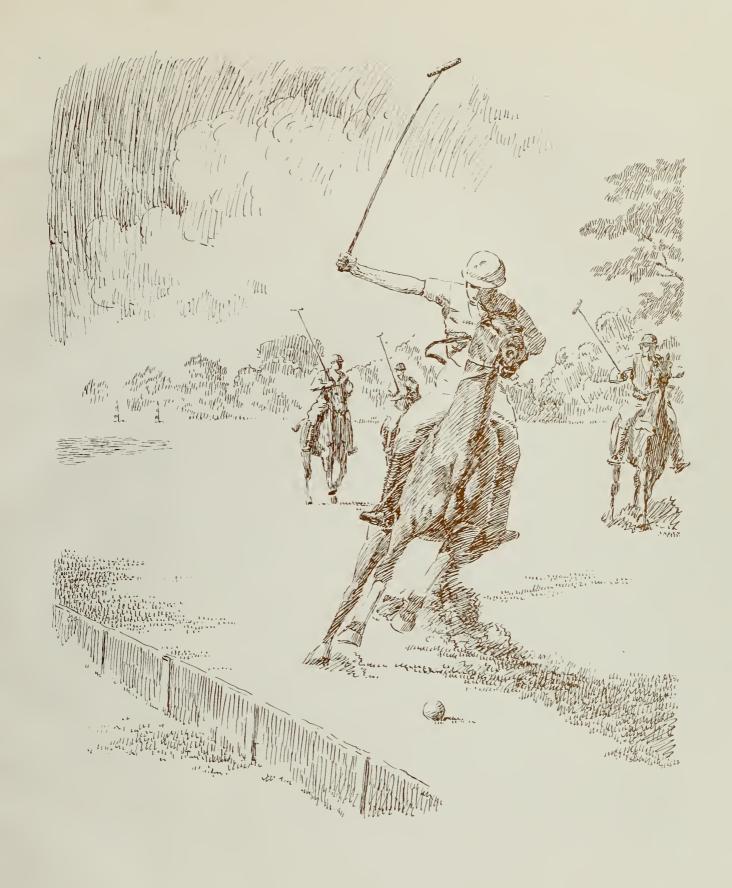
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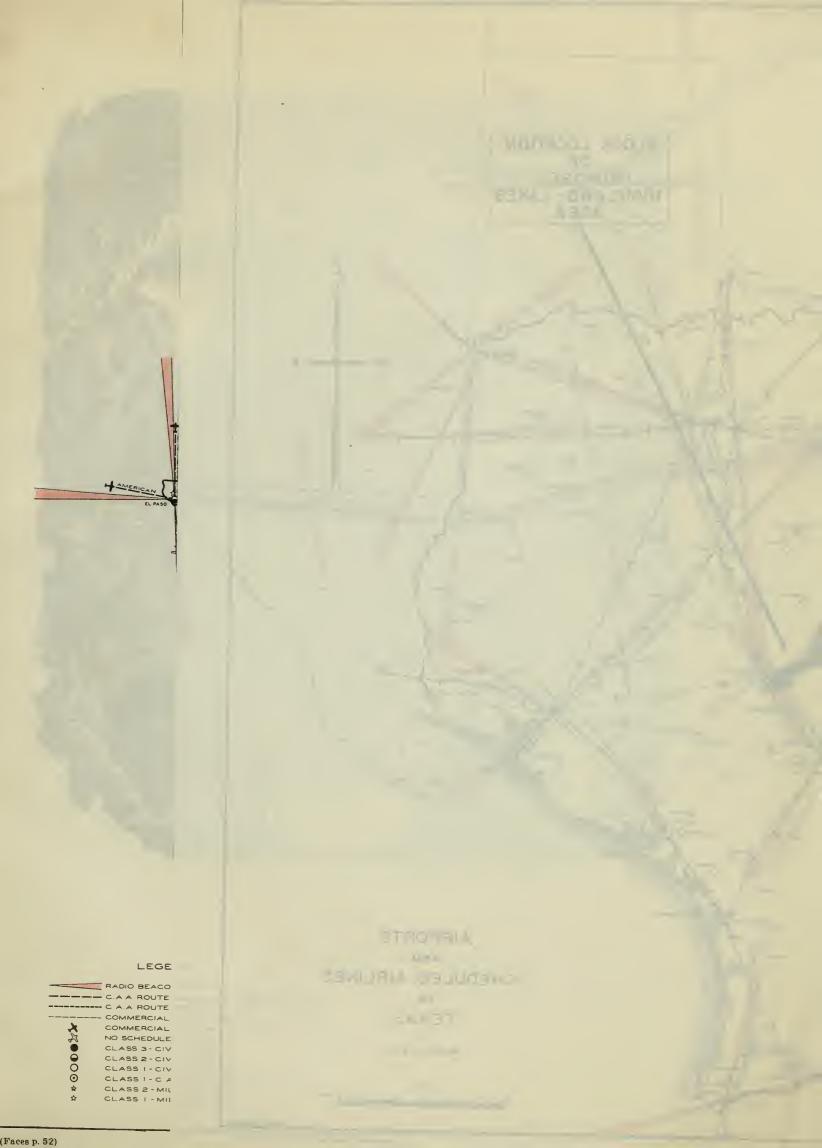
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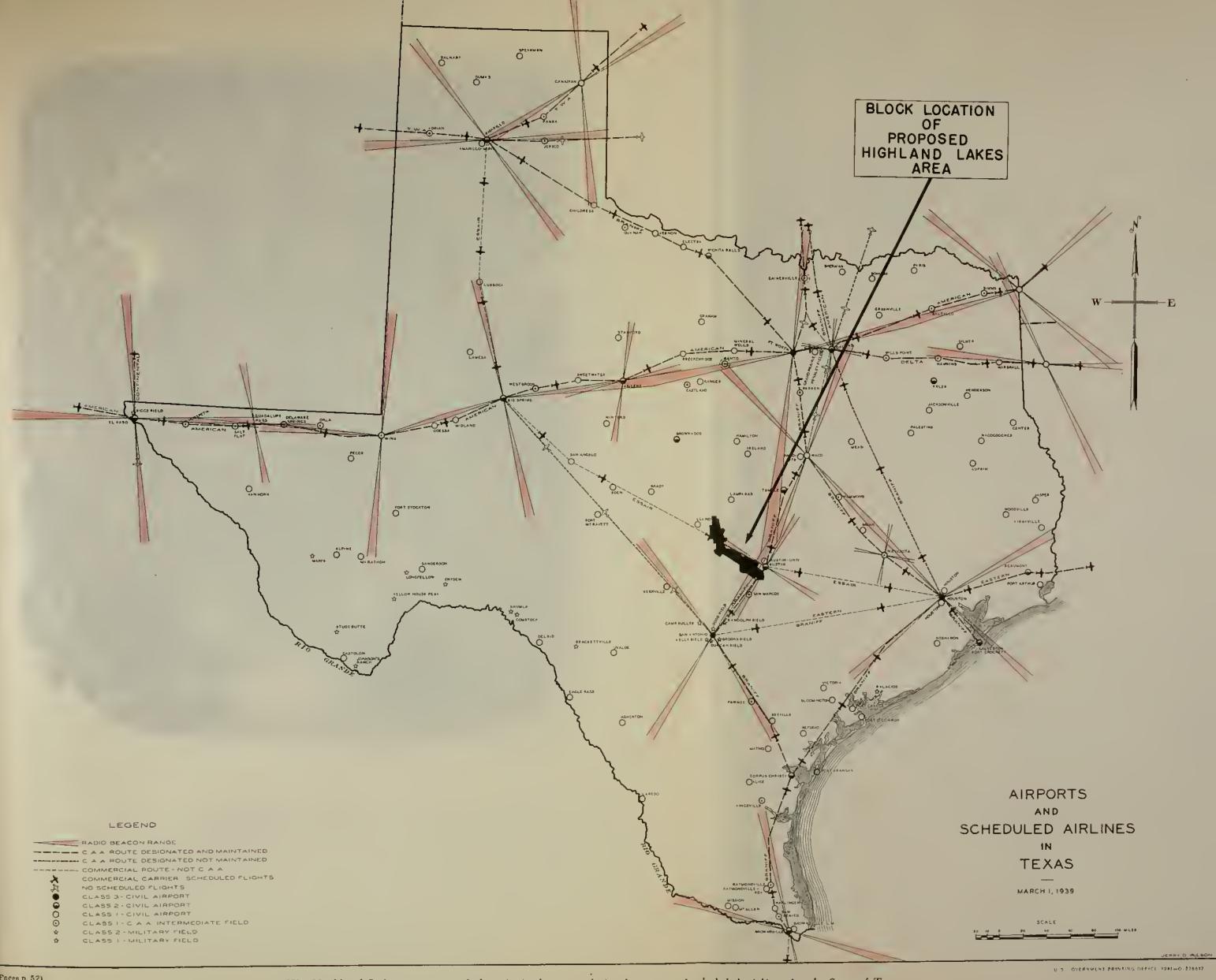
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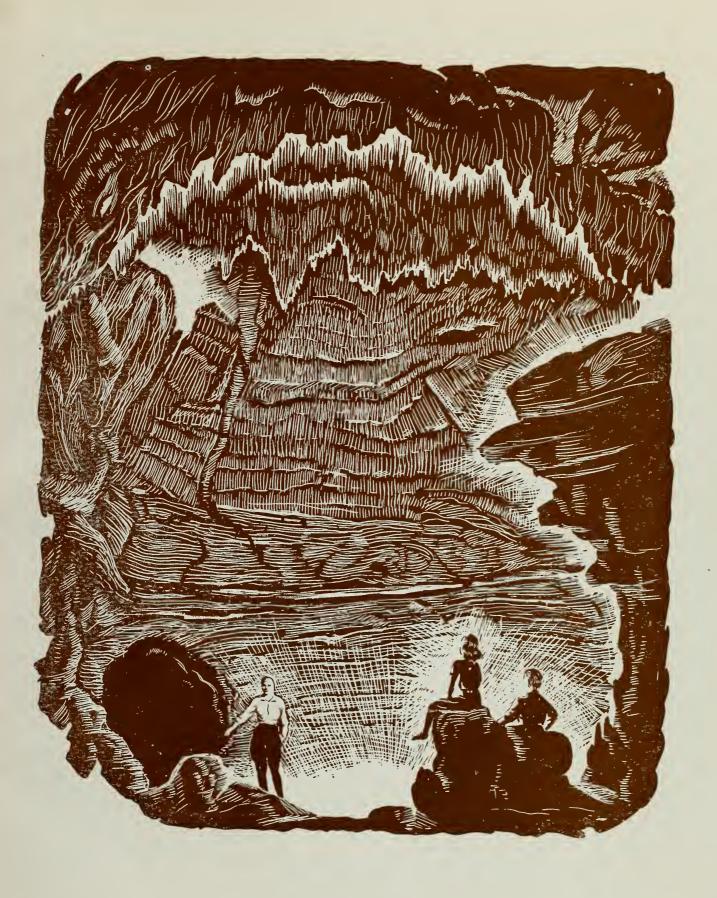


Sports that provide active participation and entertainment for large crowds of people should prove popular in a region that is already devoted to polo.

The Highland Lakes are at one of the principal cross roads in the system of scheduled air lines for the State of Texas.







Longhorn Caverns are proving to be popular with tourists. With but two caves in the United States that are more extensive (Carlsbad and Mammoth) this attraction is bound to increase in popularity and patronage.

BLUE BONNETS

Serve as an azure carpet for hundreds of acres in the Highland Lakes Region. There is nothing like this display of lupines anywhere else in the United States. More people should see it. No doubt they would if it were made attractively accessible to them.





This view of burnt-over land is typical of thousands of acres in the Hill Country that are being ruined scenically to provide better grazing for goats and sheep. This practice must be discontinued if the Highland Lakes Region is to retain its value as a park and recreational area.



There is a certain ruggedness combined with the aspects of a true wilderness that one may find today along hundreds of miles of country roads and lanes throughout the Hill Country. The cutting and burning of cedar must be discontinued if this character is to be preserved.



Longborn Caverns Administration Building

IN CONCLUSION

It is fully realized that if the suggestions and recommendations herein set forth are to be favorably received, they must represent a fair appraisal of and a reasonable solution to the problem discussed. It is likewise fully realized that the conclusions reached must, above all else, be based upon premises so sound that they can be accepted as statements of fact. As acceptable bases from which to draw conclusions it is believed that the following statements may be accepted as self-evident.

It is contended that any community of men must make certain provisions for its members if it is to be successful and permanent. There must be provided a place in which to *live* and a place in which to *work*. Any constructive services above and beyond these two requirements serve in direct proportion to their application to lift a community out of the category of a

confined existence. As additional provisions above these basic requirements are added, by just so much will a community progress toward the ever-hoped-for goal of an "ideal community." If a community is to break through these imaginary prison walls of "stay alive" and "work" and approach a status that is near to that hoped-for goal of an "ideal community," at least two more provisions must be supplied to its members. There must be provided recreation; and there must be provided inspiration.

One way of stating it would be to say that "everyone needs recreation and everyone needs inspiration"; that is, if they are to assume their proper place as competent and well-rounded citizens of a civilized society.

By recreation we mean something to do, something to think about that is *not* work, something a little different from the humdrum routine of everyday existence.

By inspiration we mean something to help us see the world and our place in it, not just the



Longhorn Caverns Entrance Pergola.

The administration building and entrance pergola serve as an introduction to the third largest caverns in the United States. The caverns are the principal feature of a State Park development that serves to attract thousands annually to the center of the Lake Region. To be appreciated they must be seen.



Just one hundred years ago the town of Austin was a sprawling village of log cabins on the outer fringes of an unexplored wilderness.

 limited three or four cubic feet of space occupied by our respective bodies, but something that will help us to feel the presence of the universal forces that have shaped the earth as we know it and that serve as invisible directors of our destiny.

Recreation and inspiration in their many and various forms may run the whole gamut of activities such as the theater, literature, travel, music, sports of a hundred varieties, etc., but it is again repeated: "if permanence and success are to be achieved, recreation and inspiration in some form must be provided as corollaries to the provisions of stay alive and work."

Next to a communion with men and the products of their minds, a communion with nature is considered to be one of the greatest sources of that inspiration and recreation so vitally necessary to us all. It is sincerely believed that national and state parks as we know them and the opportunities they provide for that communion constitute one of the best known methods of supplying these essentials. At least the growth of a National Park System from a small nucleus of western areas to 22,000,000 acres in a period of 25 years, and the rapid growth of a State Park system throughout the nation to more than

. 4,000,000 acres would seem to bear out the contention that these areas do play an important part in the daily life of this nation and its people. The implication in this statement is that millions of people do profitably use these millions of park acres, which is true.

It can also be stated as a truism that the activities of all civilized communities have long been organized on the basis that the community as a whole must provide certain services to its members. Each member in turn must contribute in some measure to the support of the community.

Without men living thus as interdependent beings there would be no community life. Without the community each individual would become a free-lance pioneer, self-sufficient, self-maintained, a hermit unconcerned about his neighbor's existence or his mode of life. The very thought of a world made up entirely of such recluse entities is inconceivable and fortunately

is not true. Such a way of life is not possible in this the twentieth century.

If we can agree that men must have a place in which to live and some source of livelihood, if we can agree that they must be furnished with provisions which we have called recreation and inspiration, we can then rightly ask, how do such problems apply to this community of men, this subdivision of the Nation called Texas? What of its 6,000,000 or more people, its interdependent members who are participating daily in the community life of this State?

Unquestionably, all of them have a place in which to live, even though this provision in many instances is not all that could be desired. Likewise the opportunities to work are almost as limitless as the State itself, in the scope, in the variety, and in the amount of work to be done.

But what of the opportunities for recreation and inspiration which not only seem, but are, so



Today Austin is a thriving city which serves as the State's governmental and educational center. This Athens of Texas could and should be made to serve as the State's recreational center.



The coin on the opposite page (ONE CENT) represents the actual amount that each person in Texas was called upon to contribute through authorized appropriations of the State legislature to defray the cost of developing and administering the Texas State Park Program in 1938.

ONE CENT per person hardly seems sufficient to finance a park program of thirty-two areas, to develop and maintain them in a manner that is worthy of the largest and one of the wealthiest States in the Nation.

If dollars are to be expected in return, ONE CENT is not a very generous yearly capital outlay. Any enterprise, be it purely business or purely philanthropic in nature, could not be expected to produce many worth-while results on such a meager yearly capital investment.

If the Highland Lakes Region is added to the State's system of recreational facilities, it will be obvious that appropriations must be substantially increased.

obviously essential? It can safely be said that these last two provisions, like the first two, have been provided in abundance within the State's borders also. But the point is not: do these things exist today?—that is admitted—but, will these things exist tomorrow and tomorrow?

It seems unlikely that thinking men and women will quarrel with the statement that "recreation in some form is a basic and fundamental requirement," for it has long been universally recognized as such. Nor is it likely that they will disagree with the further statement that "it is the privilege and the duty of its citizens to see that this requirement is made available and maintained." There may be a divergence of opinion as to the extent and method of supplying these requirements, but certainly there will be complete agreement on the rightness of the requirements themselves.

Since the field of this survey and discussion is confined to the subject of park and recreational facilities and the part they can and do play in providing recreation and inspiration, it is only reasonable to assume that it has been our constant thought that a well-developed recreational area in the Highland Lakes Region would play an important part in this connection, where Texas is concerned.

We would suggest that the State free its recreational and scenic wealth wherever it is to be found and make these assets available to the people. By freeing them, we mean to acquire them, to transpose them from private to public ownership, for recreational and scenic wealth that is privately owned and inaccessible to the public represents merely frozen assets of no particular value to the State or its people if they are not put into circulation.

The question then becomes: How can these assets be liquidated? Who shall take the initiative for freeing them and making them available to the public?

Since we have so strenuously supported the thesis that this function can best be performed by the Government in some form, it is difficult now to say otherwise. The logical answer to such a problem seems to be "the Government" in one of its many categories.

It may be the government of a single town or village, that of a county or series of counties, or it may be the government of a State, or our National Government. Each has its rightful place and duties to perform in the scheme of things, each its responsibility.

The Federal Government has recognized its responsibility in the establishment of our national system of parks.

The State of Texas has likewise recognized its responsibility by the establishment of its State park system.

From a general survey of the State, and a detailed study of the Highland Lakes Region, we are of the opinion that the State in this case should acquire and preserve an area for park and recreational purposes of a size and scope as is herein suggested.

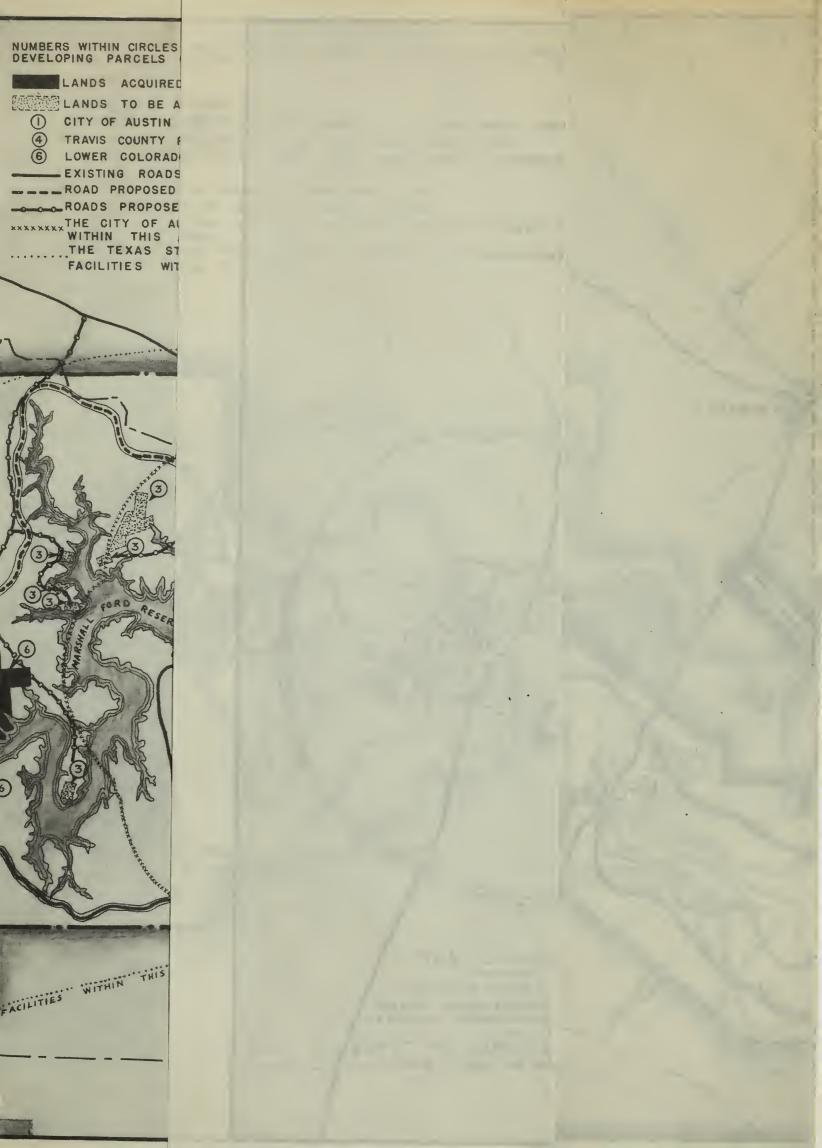
It is not enough to say "acquire and preserve," but your National Park Service would also advocate a wise use rather than the pursuance of a policy of acquiring and preserving just for the sake of saving.

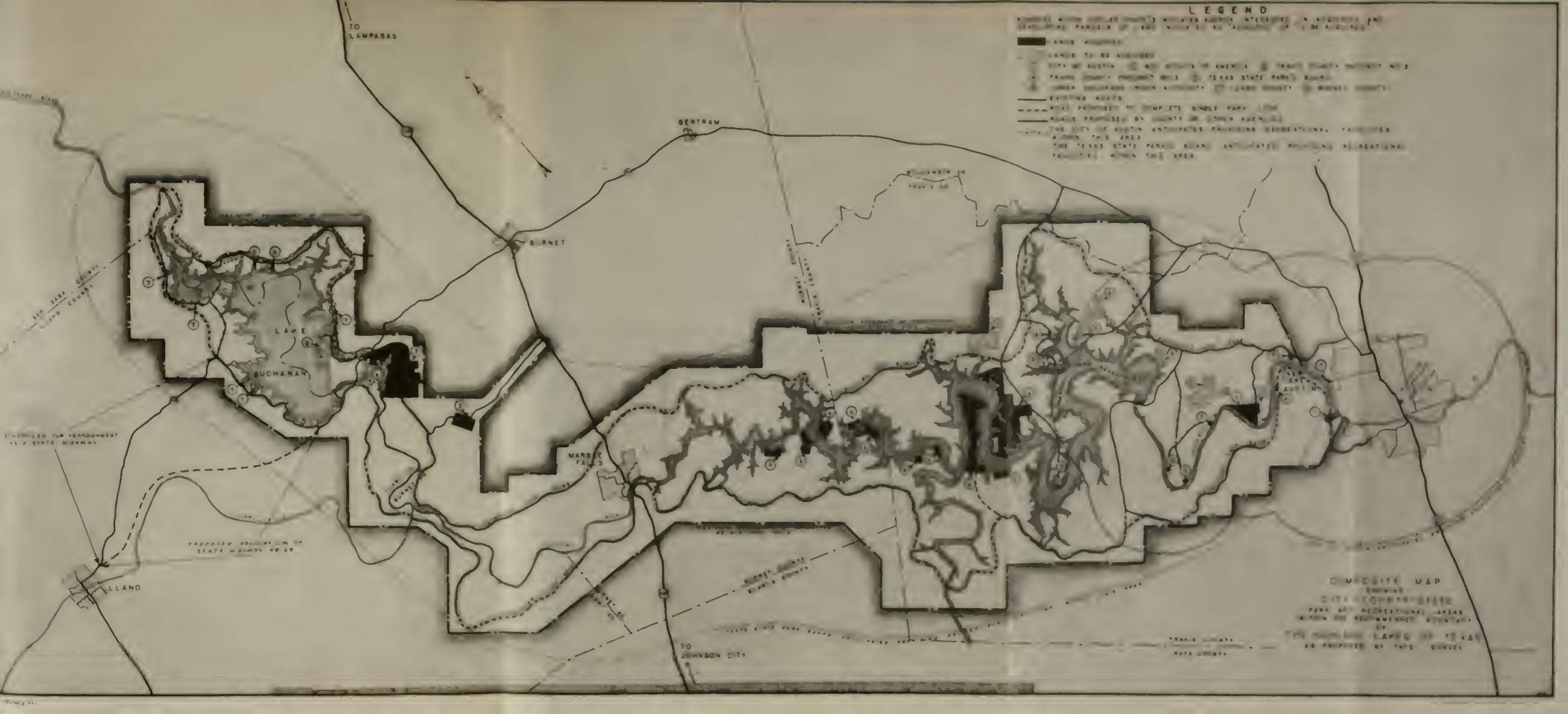
In the preceding text of this report the National Park Service has explained briefly but to the best of its ability how the State of Texas was prospected in its search for materials from which a park and recreational area of genuine worth and quality could be developed.

If the area finally selected seems to compete unfairly with other areas throughout the State, it is the responsibility of nature.

If our problem were one of determining lands suitable for irrigation, farming, grazing, or the raising of forests, obviously an altogether different answer would be forthcoming. Our problem has to do with park lands; and park lands, like gold or oil, rivers or mountains, are where nature put them.

If the people of Texas feel that they are the rightful owners of a heritage that is slowly but surely slipping from them, then it is suggested and recommended most urgently that such steps as may be considered proper be taken to assure the development of a recreational area in the Highland Lakes Region, along the lines suggested in this survey. It is believed that such a move, early undertaken, would be a wise investment.





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